



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Wilderness Sportsman Club

2. Type of Proposed Action:

Purchase of a permanent lease on 4.18 acres of Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation land adjacent to existing shooting range.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: Shooting Range is approximately 2 miles NW of the town of Seeley Lake in Powell County, MT. The Wilderness Sportsman's Club properties are approximately 4.18 acres, in the northeast one-quarter of Section 36, Township 17N, Range 15W, Principal Meridian Montana (PMM). Property was formerly leased from DNRC and was approved for purchase of a permanent lease in November, 2009.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

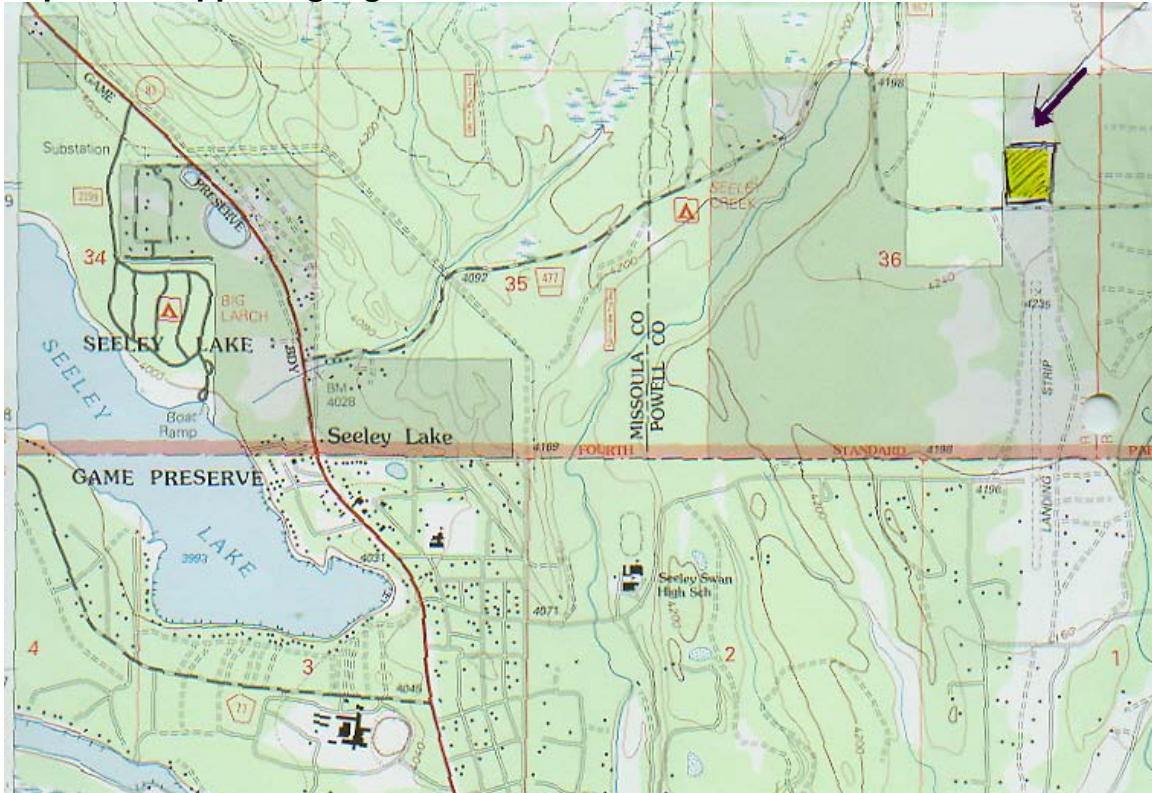
To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
- (ii) may not limit the number of members;*
- (iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
- (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s): Current range requires a safety shooting zone to be in compliance with DNRC and National Rifle Association (NRA) requirements.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): Purchase the 4.18 acres from the DNRC on a permanent lease to provide needed safety zone.

7. Maps and Supporting Figures:



Map 1--Wilderness Sportsman's Club highlighted in yellow upper right corner.

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

There are no new improvements proposed, as this has been the shooting range for the Wilderness Sportsman's Club, with rifle and shotgun ranges for at least 29 years. The club has purchased a permanent lease for the property from DNRC.

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project): The project is on an existing open shooting range in a densely forested area on state (DNRC) land just north of the Seeley Airport. Most of the range area is forested with new growth and only seedling and saplings are allowed to grow on this specific area because of its proximity to the end of an airstrip runway.

10. Description of Project: FWP would provide grant funding to the Wilderness Sportsman's Club for its purchase of a permanent easement on the DNRC properties that the club currently occupies.

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2011.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

Agency Name	Permit
DNRC	Easement Application & Checklist Completed

Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Friends of the NRA	\$35,300
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 6,500

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

FWP Hunter Education Program & Bow Hunter Education, NRA Junior Shooting Programs, Missoula County Sheriff's Department, Montana Highway Patrol, US Forest Service Law Enforcement, and FWP Game Wardens

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public

Involvement: Scoping was internal between the Sportsman's Club, FWP and DNRC.

The club has four meetings a year which are open to the public and in which the public is encouraged to attend. Club activities have been well advertised within the community.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Brian Miller, 1620 Cresthaven Drive, Missoula, MT 59808

16. Other Pertinent Information: Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: February 18, 2010.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist--The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. (An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments

2. & 5. There are no live streams, irrigation ditches or ponds on the site. No delineated wetlands.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments

4. This site is on a densely forested area previously on state lands (DNRC) and adjacent to the Lolo National Forest lands which have timber harvest operations on the forest. Adjacent area is used primarily for recreation.

5. Range location, construction and the operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for range participants and the public at large. A very comprehensive safety plan and well posted safety guidelines are in evidence throughout the range complex.

7. The range provides easy year round access. The rifle and pistol ranges are open to the public at anytime. The skeet range requires membership or recreational shooting when range personnel are present.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?

This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

The proposed alternative A and alternative B (the no action alternative) were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph (section) 10 (Description of Project) to purchase a permanent lease from DNRC and establish a safety zone for the shooting range.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** FWP Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area may remain an active shooting complex if additional funding can be found for the remainder of the sale price.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Two alternatives have been considered, **A** (Proposed Alternative) and **B** (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (**A**) nor the no action alternative (**B**) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)**: increasing the level of public safety at the range and ensuring shooting sports opportunities in the Seeley Lake area by continuing the range activities on permanently leased club properties.
- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not provide FWP funds for purchase of permanent lease for the 4.18-acre safety zone adjacent to the existing shooting range. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations): NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Brian Miller, 1620 Cresthaven Drive, Missoula, MT 59808
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of this proposal have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. No part of the proposal reviewed was complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties owned by Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. The low impact activities proposed to continue, and the increased recreational opportunity, all indicate that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The Wilderness Sportsman Club's proposed alternative, to obtain a permanent lease to provide a safe regulated shooting opportunity is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the expansion proposals outlined in Part I paragraphs (sections) 2 & 10.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
(M.S. Wildlife Management)
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: June 9, 2010

Approved By FWP: July 26, 2010

PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Describe public involvement, if any:

Announcement for EA comment will be published in The Pathfinder at Seeley Lake and on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website to allow an opportunity for public review. Additionally the EA will be available for review on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website.